

REMARKS

The Office Action of April 17, 2009 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

The present Amendment revises claim 1 so that it now includes a portion of the subject matter that was previously recited in claim 6.

The present Amendment also revises all of the claims to conform them to the changes in claim 1 and also to make improvements in accordance with US claim-drafting practice. The informalities noted in sections 2-4 of the Office Action are among those that have been corrected, so the claim objections should be withdrawn.

The present Amendment also adds a new dependent claim to further protect the invention.

The Office Action rejects all of the claims for obviousness based on a published US application by Felsher (which incorporates additional prior art by reference) in view of a published US application by Tello. However, the features recited in the current formulation of claim 1 provide a system in which access authorization to secure files is limited by at least one of an environment fingerprint and a time fingerprint, and possibly also a password fingerprint. It is respectfully submitted that the references would not have provided an incentive for an ordinarily skilled person to achieve the invention that is now defined by claim 1.

The Felsher reference is directed to a system for creating, maintaining, transmitting, and using secure medical records. However, nothing in the reference would suggest using an environment fingerprint and/or time fingerprint to protect access. Moreover, the secure medical records are held in trust by an independent third party that serves the medical community at large (see Felsher's Abstract), which teaches away from the use of time and environment fingerprints.

As was noted above, several limitations of claim 6 have now been transferred to claim 1, which now recites that the "authorization module" includes "a password fingerprint unit, an environment fingerprint sampling unit, and a time fingerprint sampling unit, which are set in parallel, as well as an authorization unit." In its rejection of claim 6, the Office Action draws attention to Felsher's paragraph [0087], which refers to US patent 6,041,411 and advises that verification can include locking digital information to a requesting computer system by

comparing a generated digital fingerprint associated with the digital information to a digital fingerprint that was previously generated and which is unique to the requesting computer system. The Office Action takes the position that Felsher discloses a unique fingerprint generating device which qualifies as an environment fingerprint sampling unit and fingerprint digital information, and according to the present time when sampled, a time fingerprint sampling unit. Applicants respectfully disagree with this conclusion, on the ground that the reference does not disclose a unique fingerprint generating unit for a time fingerprint or an environment fingerprint. As for patent 6,041,411, it is also respectfully submitted that this reference does not disclose an authorization module that includes a password fingerprint unit, an environment fingerprint sampling unit, and a time fingerprint sampling unit, which are set in parallel, along with an authorization unit as recited in claim 1.

The Hillhouse reference discloses a method of securing a cryptographic key to improve portability of secure encryption key data files. However, the reference does not disclose the "authorization module" of claim 1. The Sudia reference likewise fails to disclose the "authorization module" of claim 1.

Turning now to Tello, this reference is directed to a technique for providing a secure boot process for a personal computer. Although Tello uses a security kernel, the reference provides no clue as to the "authorization unit" of claim 1.

The remaining claims depend (directly or indirectly) from claim 1 and recite additional limitations to further define the invention. They are therefore automatically patentable along with claim 1 and need not be further discussed. It is nevertheless noted that new dependent claim 61 recites that "the environment fingerprint sampling unit determines whether a request for decryption of one of the encrypted secret files originated from a client machine that is authorized to decrypt said one of the encrypted secret files" and that "the time signature sampling unit determines whether said request for decryption has occurred during a limited time window set for authorized decryption," and it is respectfully submitted that these recitations further distinguish the disclosure in Felsher's paragraph [0087].

Since this Amendment adds a further claim in excess of 20, an excess claim fee of \$26 (for a small entity) is included in a remittance that is being submitted concurrently.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Allen Wood
Registration No. 28,134
Rabin & Berdo, P.C.
Customer No. 23995
(202) 326-0222 (telephone)
(202) 408-0924 (facsimile)

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